

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DAKAR 00382 01 OF 02 161020Z
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AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY BANJUL POUCH
AMEMBASSY BISSAU POUCH
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DAKAR 0382

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, SG
SUBJECT: SENEGALESE PARTIES HOLD PRE-ELECTION CONGRESSES

REF: 77 DAKAR A-79 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: SENEGAL'S GOVERNING PARTI SOCIALISTE (PS) AND
OPPOSITION (PDS) BOTH HELD NATIONAL CONGRESSES IN DAKAR
DURING LAST WEEK OF DECEMBER IN PREPARATION FOR FEBRUARY 26
LOCAL, PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. PS
DROPPED FROM POLITICAL BUREAU THREE PARTY LEADERS WHO HAD
LOST POPULAR FOLLOWING IN THEIR LOCAL OR ORGANIZATIONAL
CONSTITUENCIES, BUT ENDORSED EXISTING PARTY DOCTRINE AND
RENOMINATED PRESIDENT SENGHOR. PS EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR
SADAT'S JERUSALEM VISIT, THE ANGLO-AMERICAN RHODESIA PLAN,
THE GROUP OF FIVE'S INITIATIVES ON NAMIBIA, AND EFFORTS TO
DETER THE TAKING OF HOSTAGES AS A POLITICAL TACTIC. PDS
NOMINATED ITS SECRETARY-GENERAL, ABDOULAYE WADE, TO RUN
AGAINST SENGHOR, AND MOUNTED CRITICAL ATTACK ON GOVERN-
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PAGE 02 DAKAR 00382 01 OF 02 161020Z

MENT POLICIES. ELECTIONS WILL PROVIDE CLOSELY WATCHED
TEST OF SENEGAL'S APPROACH TO MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY. END
SUMMARY.

2. FINAL WEEKS OF 1977 SAW CRESCENDO OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY
IN SENEGAL CULMINATING IN CONGRESSES OF GOVERNING PS AND
OPPOSITION PDS WHICH TOOK PLACE SUCCESSIVELY IN DAKAR

AT END OF DECEMBER. PS CONGRESS CLIMAXED TWO-MONTH PERIOD OF "RENEWAL" OF PARTY'S GRASS ROOTS ORGANIZATION DURING WHICH TWO PARTY LEADERS WERE UNSEATED AND OTHERS FACED SPIRITED CHALLENGES. IN SOUTHERN CASAMANCE REGION, LOCAL PARTY LEADER ITIENNE CARVALHO (WHO IS ZIGUINCHOR MAYOR AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEPUTY) WAS DEFEATED BY MAMADOU ABDOULAYE SY, RUSTIC POPULIST WHO BUILT LOCAL POPULARITY THROUGH CLASSIC WARD HEELING TECHNIQUES. AGING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEPUTY THEOPHILE JAMES ALSO LOST HIS POSITION AS PARTY HEAD IN GOSSAS IN SINE-SALOUM REGION.

3. PS CONGRESS RECOGNIZED EXPRESSION OF POPULAR WILL BY DROPPING CARVALHO AND JAMES FROM POLITICAL BUREAU, ALONG WITH UNPOPULAR MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS DOUDOU NGOM, WHO WAS OUSTED FROM LEADERSHIP OF NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF SENEGALESE WORKERS (CNTS) IN NOVEMBER (77 DAKAR 7977). THERE IS THUS SOME JUSTIFICATION FOR PRESIDENT SENGHOR'S REMARK IN END-OF-YEAR INTERVIEW THAT "DEMOCRACY WITHIN THE PARTI SOCIALISTE" WAS ULTIMATELY MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN MULTIPARTY POLITICAL COMPETITION. WITH THOSE THREE EXCEPTIONS, SMOOTHLY ORGANIZED PS CONGRESS REINSTATED EXISTING PARTY LEADERSHIP (INCLUDING ENTIRE INCUMBENT GENERAL SECRETARIAT), ENDORSED RECORD OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT AND, TO NO ONE'S SURPRISE, NOMINATED LEOPOLD SEDAR SENGHOR FOR PRESIDENT. SENGHOR'S MAJOR ADDRESS WAS PACKED WITH "FACTS"

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PAGE 03 DAKAR 00382 01 OF 02 161020Z

AND FIGURES" DEMONSTRATING PROGRESS TOWARD GOAL OF "SOCIALIST AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY" FOR YEAR 2001 WHICH WAS ADOPTED AT DECEMBER 1976 EXTRA-ORDINARY CONGRESS (77 DAKAR A-15).

4. PS CONGRESS PASSED GENERAL RESOLUTION WHICH, INTER ALIA, AFFIRMED THAT SADAT'S "COURAGEOUS" JERUSALEM VISIT HAD REINFORCED CHANCES FOR PEACE, CALLED FOR INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE UNDER PLO DIRECTION, SUPPORTED ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN ON RHODESIA AS MEANS FOR TRANSFER OF POWER TO BLACK MAJORITY, AND EXPRESSED SATISFACTION OVER PROGRESS REALIZED BY GROUP OF FIVE ON NAMIBIA WHILE CALLING FOR "MORE VIGOROUS ACTION BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY" ON THAT ISSUE. REFERRING TO AFRICAN HORN AND WESTERN SAHARA, RESOLUTION DECLARED THAT NO PROBLEM ON WHICH AFRICAN COUNTRIES WERE OPPOSED COULD BE DEFINITELY RESOLVED BY ARMS, AND CALLED ON PARTIES CONCERNED TO ACCEPT MEDIATION BY OAU. PARTY DEMANDED LIBERATION OF SENEGALESE CARRIED OFF IN MAURITANIA BY POLISARIO AND DENOUNCED TAKING OF HOSTAGES IN GENERAL.

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PAGE 01 DAKAR 00382 02 OF 02 161126Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 DAKAR 0382

5. IA CONTRAST TO CLOCKWORK OF PS CONCLAVE, SUBSEQUENT PDS CONGRESS WAS TURBULENT AFFAIR WHERE INVITED GUESTS WERE UNABLE TO SQUEEZE THROUGH MILLING CROWDS OUTSIDE THE MEETING PLACE, AND SECRETARY GENERAL ABDOULAYE WADE'S CLOSING PRESS CONFERENCE WAS POSTPONED FOR THREE SUCCESSIVE DAYS. STILL, PDS PRODUCED ESTIMATED 1600 CONGRESS PARTICIPANTS FROM ACROSS COUNTRY, REPRESENTING CLAIMED PARTY MEMBERSHIP OF 500,000. PDS MILITANTS CHANTED "CHANGE, CHANGE" IN WOLOF, NOMINATED WADE FOR PRESIDENCY AND MOUNTED TELLING CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON PEANUT MARKETING, NATIONAL LANGUAGES, "PARTICIPATION RESPONSABLE" (UNDER WHICH UNION LEADERS ARE CO-OPTED INTO GOVERNMENT) AND LEGISLATION ON PARTY IDEOLOGIES. PDS ENUNCIATED DOCTRINE OF "TRAVAILLISME" AND CALLED FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BASED ON AGRICULTURE AND SELF-HELP. WADE IS PURSUING SO-FAR FUTILE CAMPAIGN TO WIN ACCEPTANCE AS STANDARD BEARER FOR ENTIRE SENEGALESE LEFT, AND HE HAS CALLED FOR ILL-DEFINED "NATIONAL FRONT" OF ALL PARTIES AFTER ELECTIONS. DESPITE WADE'S LEFTIST POSE AND HIS
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DAKAR 00382 02 OF 02 161126Z

TIES TO POLISARIO AND MPLA, HOWEVER, HE FAVORS FOREIGN

INVESTMENT, CONSIDERS NATIONALIZATION NECESSARY ONLY IN "WATER AND ELECTRICITY," HAS TO CONTENT WITH LAW DEFINING HIS PARTY'S IDEOLOGICAL PREFERENCE AS "LIBERAL," AND HAS PERSISTENT IMAGE AS FRIEND OF U.S. AND WEST.

6. ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM GOVERNMENT, MEDIA MADE EFFORT TO PROVIDE REASONABLE COVERAGE OF PDS, AS WELL AS PS, CONGRESSES, AND DAKAR STREETS WERE FESTOONED WITH BLUE-AND-WHITE PDS BANNERS ALONGSIDE MORE FAMILIAR GREEN-AND-WHITE PS STANDARDS. NO ONE (EXCEPT THE PDS) IS PREDICTING DEFEAT FOR THE PS IN FEBRUARY 26 LOCAL, PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, BUT PDS HAS COME FAR SINCE ITS UNPROMISING BEGINNINGS IN AUGUST 1974. SOME VETERAN POLITICAL OBSERVERS EVEN WITHIN THE PS LEADERSHIP ARE NOW PREDICTING THAT COMBINED OPPOSITION VOTE MIGHT TAKE UP TO ONE-FOURTH OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEATS. THIS REFERS LARGELY TO PDS, SINCE MARXIST-LENINIST PARTI AFRICAINE DE L'INDEPENDENCE DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE GOTTEN OFF THE GROUND.

7. PS LEADERS ARE MEETING THIS WEEK TO DETERMINE RANK-ORDER OF PARTY'S NATIONAL LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR PARLIAMENT. UNDER NEWLY ADOPTED SYSTEM OF "SCRUTIN PROPORTIONNEL AU NIVEAU NATIONAL," EACH PARTY WILL TAKE SHARE OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEATS ROUGHLY CORRESPONDING TO ITS SHARE OF VOTE, AND LOWER RANKING CANDIDATES ON RESPECTIVE NATIONAL LISTS WILL BE ELIMINATED. CAMPAIGN IS EXPECTED TO BE ENLIVENED BY ACTIVITIES OF DISGRUNTLED PS MEMBERS THROWING THEIR SUPPORT TO PDS AND VICE-VERSO; NEWSPAPERS REGULARLY REPORT ALLEGED DEFECTIONS IN ONE DIRECTION OR THE OTHER&.

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PAGE 03 DAKAR 00382 02 OF 02 161126Z

8. SUPREME COURT ON JANUARY 7 THREW OUT SUIT BY CHEIKH ANTA DIOP'S RASSEMBLEMENT NATIONAL DEMOCRATIQUE (RND) FOR OFFICIAL RECOGNITION AS POLITICAL PARTY (DUE TO PRO-CEDURAL IRREGULARITY), AND PRESIDENT SENGHOR HAS MADE CLEAR THAT CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION NECESSARY TO AUTHORIZE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSERVATIVE MOUVEMENT REPUBLICAIN SENEGALAIS (MRS) OF DAKAR LAWYER BOUBACAR GUEYE AS FOURTH LEGAL POLITICAL GROUPING WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED UNTIL AFTER ELECTIONS. POLITICAL DYNAMICS OF EXISTING PARTIES AND OTHER INTEREST GROUPS ARE, HOWEVER, SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE THAT SENEGAL'S FIRST NATIONAL ELECTIONS UNDER PRESENT MULTIPARTY SYSTEM WILL PROVIDE CLOSELY WATCHED TEST OF PRESIDENT SENGHOR'S APPROACH TO GUIDED DEMOCRACY. SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS HAS ALREADY TAKEN SATISFACTION IN "EXAMPLE OF TOLERANCE" WHICH SUCCESSFUL HOLDING OF TWO PARTY CONGRESSES OFFERS REST OF AFRICA, AND CALLED

COUNTRY'S "DEMOCRATIC OPENING" A "REASON FOR PRIDE" FOR
ALL SENEGALESE. A FEW SCATTERED INCIDENTS
APPARENTLY TOOK PLACE DURING PARTY "RENEWAL" ACTIVITIES
IN HINTERLAND, BUT AUTHORITIES ARE TAKING FURTHER
PRECAUTIONS PRIOR TO FULL-FLEDGED ELECTION CAMPAIGN
(INCLUDING BAN ON HUNTING AND ON SALE OF AMMUNITION),
AND EXPECTATIONS ARE THAT VIOLENCE WILL BE KEPT TO MINIMUM
DURING ELECTIONS.
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